

Message Text

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63

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 L-03 DRC-01 /052 W

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R 091755Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7435

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRIDGETOWN 1179

E.O. 11652: DOWNGRADE AFTER 7/8/75

TAGS: ETRN BB

SUBJ: CIVAIR: POSSIBLE BACKGROUND ON PRESENT GOB STANCE

1. IN AN EFFORT TO DETERMINE SOME BACKGROUND TO CURRENT GOB AVIATION STANCE, EMBOFF ASKED COURT LINE REPRESENTATIVE (AND SOMETIME BARROW CONFIDANT) HARRY MOFFETT TO EMBASSY. MOFFETT CONJECTURED THAT BARROW'S VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO SECURE ROUTE TO U.S. INCLUDING BAHAMAS WERE PROMPTED BY BARROW'S DESIRE OF BRINGING BAHAMAS INTO CARICOM AND TO BRING BAHAMASAIR INTO ACTIVE ROLE IN CARICOM AREA. MOFFETT ADMITTED ALSO THAT BARROW'S EFFORTS TO PROTECT NEAR-DEFUNCT CARGO CARRIER CARIBWEST MAY ALSO PLAY PART IN CURRENT GOB STRATEGIES.

2. MOFFETT, EMPHASIZING THAT HE HAD NO REAL INSIDE INFORMATION ON PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AND THAT HIS VIEWS WERE PURELY CONJECTURAL, CLAIMED THAT WHEN BARROW AND DEMAS BOTH VISITED GCOB PM PINDLING IN MID-JUNE THAT SOME SORT OF DEAL MAY HAVE BEEN STRUCK INVOLVING AIR ROUTES AND GCOB ENTRY INTO CARICOM. MOFFETT CLAIMED THAT PINDLING MAY HAVE BEEN AGREEABLE TO GCOB CARICOM ENTRY IN EXCHANGE FOR BAHAMASAIR ROUTE TO US AND INTO CARICOM (BARBADOS). MOFFETT EXPRESSED VIEW THAT BARROW WANTED BAHAMASAIR INVOLVEMENT IN CARICOM TO OFFSET BWIA. PRESENT

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BAHAMASAIR ROUTE, WHICH INCLUDES MIAMI, WOULD HOOK UP NICELY

WITH AN ENLARGED ROUTE INTO CARICOM. QUERIED AS TO HOW BARROW COULD DESIGNATE BAHAMASAIR AS BARBADIAN CARRIER, MOFFETT IMPLIED THAT SOME SORT OF FINANCIAL SWITCH MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

3. EMBOFF QUERIED MOFFETT ABOUT BARROW'S PROTECTIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS LOCAL CARGO CARRIER CARIBWEST WHICH IS NOW WITHOUT OPERABLE AIRCRAFT AND WHICH HAS NOT FLOWN SINGLE PLANE THIS YEAR. CARIBWEST IS ALSO OVER US \$750,000 IN DEBT WITH SEVERAL HEFTY JUDGMENTS AGAINST IT, INCLUDING ONE BY PAA FOR SOME US \$140,000. EMBOFF SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT BARROW HAD REFUSED TO LET ANY OTHER AIRLINE FLY CARGO FROM BARBADOS TO OTHER WINDWARD/LEEWARD ISLANDS WITH RESULT THAT AIR CARGO SITUATION WAS "TOTAL MESS" AT MOMENT WITH BULGING BARBADOS WAREHOUSES AND RECIPIENTS IN OTHER ISLANDS FORCED TO PICK UP CARGO PHYSICALLY HERE. PAA AND AIR CANADA HAVE REPORTEDLY NOT ACCEPTED ANY CARGO FOR LESSER ISLANDS FOR SOME TIME. MOFFETT CONFIRMED THAT THIS SITUATION EXISTED AND ADMITTED THAT BARROW MIGHT BE CASTING ABOUT TO HELP CARIBWEST OUT OF ITS TROUBLES BY GETTING IT SOME OF US ROUTE ACTION. HE WAS NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR HOW THIS WOULD BE DONE.

4. MOFFETT DESCRIBED PRESENT FINANCIAL POSITION OF COURT LINE AS "PRECARIOUS" AND DISCLOSED THAT COMPANY DIRECTORS WERE COMING UNDER PRESSURE TO DROP UNPROFITABLE OPERATIONS, I.E. LIAT AND COURT'S STRING OF CARIBBEAN HOTELS. MOFFETT HAD NO IDEA WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO PRESENT SCHEDULE IF LIAT WENT UNDER BUT HE SAID POSITION OF SOME OF LESS-DEVELOPED ISLANDS (PARTICULARLY GRENADA) WAS "DESPERATE." GRENADA'S POSSIBLE REQUEST FOR RELIEF THROUGH OBTAINING SAN JUAN-GRENADA AIR OPERATION WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL.

5. MOFFETT ALSO DISCLOSED THAT BARROW WAS UNDER IMPRESSION THAT BRITISH AIRWAYS HAD OBTAINED FIFTH FREEDOM RIGHTS FROM NEW YORK-LOS ANGELES. EMBOFF EXPRESSED EXTREME SURPRISE AND DOUBT THAT US WOULD GIVE FOREIGN CARRIER DOMESTIC ROUTE IN THIS FASHION-A ROUTE THAT EVEN PAA DID NOT HAVE. NEVERTHELESS, MOFFETT SAID THAT BARROW WAS CONVINCED THAT THIS WAS CASE AND INTENDED USE THIS ARGUMENT IN PUSHING FOR BAHAMAS.

6. COMMENT. MOFFETT'S VIEWS HAVE HARDLY SERVED TO CLARIFY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOB STAND. COMPLICATED BY-PLAY INVOLVING BAHAMASAIR MAY SHED SOME LIGHT ON GOB INSISTENCE ON ROUTE INCLUDING BAHAMAS; HOWEVER, OWNERSHIP PROBLEM WOULD APPEAR TO BE AT LEAST AS COMPLICATED AS WITH ICA. ANY INFORMATION EMBASSY NASSAU MAY HAVE TO FILL IN PICTURE WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

7. WOULD APPRECIATE LIST OF U.S. PARTICIPANTS IN THIS MONTH'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE TIMES.

WOOLLONS

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